

THE ONLY SOLUTION TO OUR ALL PROBLEMS



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Publisher
Yug Nirman Yojana Vistar Trust
Gayatri Tapobhumi, Mathura-281003
Ph. (0565) 2530128, 2530399
Fax (0565).2530200

Revised Edition- 2013

Price- Rs. 7.00

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THE RIGHTEOUS WAY

The supremacy of man among the living creatures of the world is best utilized when it is used for achieving higher ideals. Higher ideals of life have been established with the objective that mankind would follow them and lead a life of happiness and peace. Paths are built so that, treading on them, the traveler reaches his destination without being lost or involved in obstructions. The same is true for the laws of ethics and good conduct. Following them, one can reach his predetermined destination in time, thoroughly enjoying his journey to the noble goal.

The path of truth and good conduct is easy and straight for every one to follow. Even the illiterate, less intelligent and simple men can follow it. One has to be extra clever to lie, cheat or act dishonestly. An ordinary person, trying any of these, would be caught, ridiculed and defamed. Sooner or later, falsehood is detected and dishonesty found out. The folly of these then becomes obvious to the practitioner. For the one following the path of honesty and truthfulness, no such problems arise. Truth comes spontaneously. One need not be essentially clever to express what he has actually seen or felt. No difficulty, whatsoever, is involved in upright conduct. There can be no obstruction in measuring or weighing things correctly or assessing their correct value. But if the intention is to cheat or defraud the other person, extra cleverness is necessary. The effort involved in covering up wrong actions is so immense that it leaves no mental energy left for the pursuit and attainment of higher ideals in life. So much can be achieved if the energy consumed in cover up operations is used for higher objectives.

It could happen that in the beginning, the honest person may find himself a loser as compared to the dishonest person. Even the person practicing honesty may be bracketed with most others who are dishonest in the trade. But soon the difference reveals itself. As soon as the honest person is spotted out through frequent testing, he gains in all operations. People start trusting him. Every one starts treating him with affection and generosity and extends his cooperation. Others respect him and this in turn gives him mental satisfaction as also happiness of a much higher order. May be, money wise he may not become as rich as the one practicing dishonest means. It is also possible that he may be deprived of the recognition that normally follows the hypocrites but whatever he achieves would have solid foundations and be of lasting importance.

Men are attracted to unethical conduct when they take a short term view of life. Wickedness is resorted to when the objective is quick gains. Quite often, others do not see through the deceit. Many are deceived and become victims of the frauds being perpetuated on them. But every one cannot be fooled every time. If not today, tomorrow, the truth must stand out, when human energies are extravagantly spent for achieving quick gains through deceitful means, the consequences, though pleasant in the short run, the disastrous in the ultimate analysis.

It is not unusual to regard those practicing dishonesty as more intelligent compared to the simple honest persons. This is a typical manifestation of shortsightedness on the part of most people. Dishonesty can neither benefit individuals,

nor the society or the world at large. There is no wisdom in sacrificing long term gains for immediate benefits of a doubtful nature. Any one with a low modicum of intelligence can do it. Any one can enjoy for a couple of days if he chooses to dispose of all his assets. But no sensible person would accept this as a desirable course. Ultimately, it would be considered a foolish act if deceit is practiced for personal immediate gains jeopardizing the long range interests of society. It is unfortunate that collectively we are all guilty of such unwise actions.

Honesty alone can be the best and universally acceptable policy for every one to follow. This is the time trusted path that leads to stable progress and peace. There have been numerous occasions when this has been tried by mankind. Whenever deceit has been practiced, it has lead to destruction and fouling of the environment. There is no point in trying to test the maxim of honesty any further. How long can we afford to waste human time and energy testing again and again, what has been tested over the centuries? No one has possibly achieved stable success and peace through practice of dishonesty in the past. There is no point hoping that there will be an exception in our case.

As we dwell upon the problems relating to conduct of everyday life, the conclusion that emerges is that it is much better to depend on generosity, forethought and idealism rather than selfishness, vice narrow- mindedness and incivility. It is only though the former that mankind will progress. Even the solution of our collective problems is possible only through faith in superiority of ethical means and righteous conduct. If we choose to depend on anything different, our efforts are

doomed to failure. World peace is just not possible through any other means. Unless our everyday conduct is upright and righteous, there will be crime in the society in various forms. These crimes will never let the society be at peace with itself. Peace can come only through individual good conduct. Unless we agree to be righteous individually, we cannot be at peace collectively. So many of human problems have arisen on account of mankind having gone astray from the righteous path. These problems are continuously on the increase. Mankind has been making innumerable efforts to make life more comfortable. Human energy and mind is consistently engaged in inventions that are supposed to make life richer and happier. There is more of wealth, education, medical facilities, scientific progress, industrial production, laws and development and yet mankind has become no more happier. The reason for this paradox is not difficult to see. All this so called progress has adverse fall outs, the latter often neutralising all the good effects of the former. The emphasis on ends, unmindful of the means through which these have been achieved, creates in its train so many undesirable social evils that mankind is left much poorer at the end of assumed material progress. Problems and human misery keep on mounting, all progress notwithstanding.

THIS SITUATION WILL HAVE TO BE CHANGED

Over the years, there has been a steep decline in our moral standards. Man today is selfish to the extent, he was not at any other time. Mental evolution should have lead to a situation in which man becomes more generous to others although strict to himself. In this situation, every one would be

content with modest requirements for self, leaving enough time and resources for the good and progress of the society. Any society where such an attitude prevails, would be prosperous and peaceful. On the other hand, a society where self interest predominates, would be infested with all sorts of vices, exploitations and consequent social unrest. Where such devilish trends have an upper hand, the whole atmosphere gets more and more vicious.

Heaven and hell, both exist here only. They are manifested not materially but in the way of life practiced in a society. The legendary belief is that in heaven there is plenty of food, clothes, shelter, entertainment and even luxuries. Only those with nobility in their thoughts and actions reach there. If people have nobility in thoughts and actions, there would never be any shortage of material goods. Even if there were a temporary shortage, the large hearted would be able to cope with it through charity and generosity. About hell, it is said that misery, agony and pain of all kinds abound there. The wicked and sinners reside there. It is also legendary that hell is very cruelly administered through the devil's agents. One can visualise these fantasies even on earth. Where nobility pervades all thoughts and actions, heavenly peace and prosperity would follow. Conversely, where selfishness and wickedness has the upper hand, life would be hell. Concern for self is justified only to the extent it does not interfere with the requirements and rights of others around us. The limit for righteous conduct is that we all pursue goals that are necessary for provision of material goods essential for our necessities for life and efficiency. Wisdom and fore-thought demands that the wealth so acquired is spent towards noble ends. Nobility

and generosity lies in utilising the surplus time and resources available towards social good. It is the duty of men to ensure that they are always guided by qualities like respect for social dignity, fore-thought and the urge for achieving excellence in all walks of life. All actions should be guided by these qualities of head and heart. This alone is the true manifestation of humanity.

When men deviate from the above, their actions are selfish and unethical, devoid of any standards of life. Such men who are adrift from the path of their duty are the devils in a society. Where such devils abound, hell is let loose. Even abundant availability of material goods will make no difference in such a society. Heavenly conditions can prevail even in ordinary huts.

Even a palace can be a living hell. The legendary Lanka of Ravana was full of all material requisites of life and luxury. And yet, Ravana's indiscretion never allowed its inhabitants to have moments of peace. Kings, nobles, feudal lords and the wealthy, all have every item of comfort that money can buy. Yet, their near and dear ones would confirm that they rarely have moments of peace and happiness. The king is always under the sword of Damocles. The noble and the rich are always suspicious, afraid of some competitor taking them over, and victims of their own misdeeds. They know not a moment of peace and remain perpetually exposed to the heat of money related problems and worries. Their plight is awful.

So much has been attempted in the name of reforms but to no avail. Some changes take place on the fringes but the core of the problem remains unaffected. Social evils have

only changed shapes like fashion clothes. *Hookah* (hubble-bubble) has now been replaced by the more easily portable cigarettes. Prostitution is now the 'Call girl' racket. The thugs are no more but the terrorists and the corrupt officials are no better. The trade in slaves may have been banned but the dowry is no less inhuman. Human sacrifice or the slaughter of animals to please the gods is not the practice in so many societies but the same societies do practice cruelty to animals in many other forms. The corrupt politician of today is no better than the authoritarian Zamindar or feudal lord of yesterday. The forms are changing but basically the social evils and vices are not being removed, they are only being substituted. Like the actors on a stage, it is the same people appearing in different casts at different times and in different scenes. It is the same evil that some time we see as a tyrant zamindar and at some other time as a corrupt public servant. Whosoever gets a chance, plays the role. Those who do not get a chance, curse the rest. They protest and fight but only till they do not get a chance to be evil. The common example is the girl's father cursing the dowry system when his daughter is to be married and changing colours when he has a son to marry. All this happens since most men stand on rather unstable foundations and fall at the first temptation.

The individual and society, both are entangled in problems and difficulties. The only way out of these conflicts is that idealism is accepted as some thing worth practicing. It is not enough that ideals are debated and respected in principle. They have to be translated in our day to day conduct and then alone they can be meaningful. This is the prime need of the hour.

SPIRITUAL IDEALS AND THEIR ATTAINMENT

Externally, each one of us plays so many roles in life. But all these are guided by a common motive force. Blood circulates and reaches all parts of the body but it is the heart that pumps it every where. The digestive system provides necessary nutrition to all parts of the body. If the system does not function properly, every part will be adversely affected. Similarly, if heart stops functioning, every other part comes to a stand still in almost no time. In the same manner all our actions are, in the ultimate analysis, affected by our thought level; whether they are noble or ignoble. That ultimately determines our pattern of life. It has to be accepted that actions are governed by thoughts and any change in desired actions can only follow change in thoughts.

Every movement for change in human actions must start from efforts to bring about change in the thought process. Social life has many dimensions – spiritual, political, social, economic, mental and physical. Each facet has its own problems and complications. Numerous questions arise in each area and people are constantly involved in trying to find solutions to the problems. Many steps are taken to remedy the situations or resolve the conflicts. Reformers in all spheres keep on preaching what should be done for greater success and achievements. Movements are launched but efforts bear fruit only when the surrounding conditions are appropriate. Where the desired ends are not in tune with the efforts being made, the results are rarely worth while.

If the every day life of an individual is full of sin, de-

ceit, envy and malice, the evidence is obvious, that his thoughts are ignoble. Efforts bear fruits only if they are motivated with faith in good values of life. Self discipline and good conduct are basic to the success of any effort towards achievement of a goal. Spirituality is best exhibited through good conduct in every day life. Whosoever practices spirituality will achieve excellence of a level higher than that achieved by an ordinary person. Spiritual progress would be the natural course of event for the person who is pure and gentle in his every day conduct. Higher objectives like self-realisation can be achieved in such cases without much difficulty.

God is omnipresent. He pervades all forms of life on this earth. One does not have to go to any special place to feel his presence. All that one has to do is to demolish the walls of ignorance that create artificial barriers between man and his Creator. Any one who can discriminate between the real and the projection can feel His presence in everything around him. God, whose realisation offers the ultimate bliss, is also the personification of all that is true, eternal and beautiful. He can be perceived by all of us provided we make efforts to remove our ignorance and enlighten our self. Once the veil of ignorance is removed, God the Almighty starts manifesting Himself all around, in all objects, in all thoughts and in all actions providing bliss that is eternal and within. The search finally ends.

The achievement of such spiritual goals is possible for all of us. Once the process of self improvement is initiated, other things follow. Heaven, salvation, peace, God realisation and similar objectives come within reach of the individual.

ETHICS SHOULD BE THE BASIS FOR ALL POLITICS

Politics today dominates all aspects of our social life. It has assumed unusual importance in our lives. In the ancient age, politics was limited to dispensation of justice and maintenance of law and order. But now its scope has widened and it encompasses almost every sphere of our life. Health, culture, language, literature, fine arts, science and public tastes all are influenced by politics. Education, production, labour, trade, administration, justice, public works, promotion of science and technology etc. all are totally within the control or politics. Gradually the influence of politics is spreading to more and more things that were at one time considered to be of a personal nature.

In dictatorships, the people are at best a cog in the wheel of state machinery. People have no control over means through which they could know, think or derive conclusions. Public media are controlled by the dictator and, as such, public opinion is moulded the way the dictator desires. Even under other systems, politics is gradually assuming a more and more dominant role in the individual's life. The day is not far when the individual will be reduced to being a mere puppet in the hands of the politician. If such be the influence of politics in our every day life, any shortcomings in the political culture of the society is bound to affect the concerned individuals very adversely. In the present situation, where people are becoming more and more selfish, it is very necessary that the political administrators have a broad outlook and are inspired with

high ideals and morals. “As the king, so his subjects”, goes a famous saying and with lots of truth about it. Every one looks up for higher ideals or models of conduct. In the ancient age, the ‘brahmans’ (men of devout austerity) the learned and the *Rishis* (saints) guided the kings. The former used to be persons of high morals and ideals. So the king and his subjects had before them ideals of good conduct which they followed in their every day life. The direction for righteous conduct was provided by the learned and the *Rishis* who exercised moral authority over the king. The subjects only followed their king.

The politician is today’s king. The general public looks towards him for guidance and imitation so far as day to day conduct of business is concerned. The media, audio – visual as well as the printed one is full of speech exhortations, plans and movements of the politicians.

The politician is the most talked about person in meetings and conferences. They are the topic of conversation everywhere. They are the ones held responsible for all success or failure of schemes. The politician of today has achieved an important position in our lives. If that be so, he should have the ideals that were once held by the saints and *Rishis* in ancient societies. Unless that happened, from whom would the public servant and the common masses derive inspiration? Where the men at the top have a weak character, they cannot be a source of inspiration or a model worth imitation for the ordinary people. If the light house is dark, from what source would people seek the right path. The need for men with high ideals at the top is being felt in national as well as

international circles. Much of the misery and frustration among the common men all over the world can be ascribed to the dearth of such persons. The nations of the world stand divided today between rival camps with the non-aligned nations sidelined in all major world decisions.

The rival camps and powers are constantly fighting cold wars, for supremacy. Nuclear bombs have given additional power to the superpowers of the world and the danger of a third world war constantly looms large over humanity. The slightest misunderstanding can create a situation in which some nuclear device is triggered off and all that mankind has achieved over billions of years brought to a naught. Chemical warfare or a nuclear holocaust could expose the earth and its creatures to a polluted atmosphere or radiations that would render millions of people maimed or disabled for decades or even centuries to come.

The politicians of today control all the resources of the world. They have at their disposal the best brains, able advisors, technology and scientific research and so much more. All that is wanting is a generous approach and human feelings that transcend national boundaries. Only if the world today were guided by persons of the caliber of Gandhi, Christ, Buddha, Socrates, or Confucius, life on earth could have been heavenly.

How one wishes politics were not guided by diplomacy but by universal morality. If that could happen, there would be peace and happiness abounding in every part of the world. It is the responsibility of the administration to take measures that would increase production and also control

actions that are immoral. Administration is expected to ensure for all citizens equality of opportunity and social justice. These objectives can be achieved only through honest public servants who are loyal to the ideals of the state, dutiful and impartial in their conduct of official business. Laws exist in the statute books but what really matters is their implementation by the public servants in the spirit of the law. If the public servants are men of integrity and ideals, peace and prosperity of the subjects is assured.

On the other hand, if the public servants are indifferent to their responsibilities, people will lose faith in the judicious character of the state and the government. Corruption will become rampant in every walk of life. The evil and the wicked will bribe the public officials for their personal gains, howsoever, illegal they might be. The common man will suffer in such a situation being unable to compete with the wicked. All that any government does for prevention of crime in the society has negligible effect once the implementing officials are dishonest and corrupt. Public good can never be achieved through public servants who are not honest, dutiful and men of integrity.

In a democracy, the people indirectly control the administrative machinery. The people should exercise their rights with discretion. If the people choose to be influenced by factors like caste, religion or personal relationships while casting their votes and electing their representatives, they will never get a government manned by competent and capable persons. In such a situation, people should not expect a good, efficient or ideally motivated administration. The type of gov-

ernment people get would depend on the considerations they have in mind while casting their votes. In a democracy public opinion plays a vital role. Wherever the public chooses men of integrity to manage their affairs, the administrative machinery succeeds in delivering the goods. Politics today is a store house of power. Like the galloping horse it needs to be bridled by ethics and morality. This power should be utilised for public good only. Our security, prosperity, progress and peace ultimately depends on how political power is used. Diplomacy has to be substituted with universal morality and then alone there is any hope for mankind to be happy and prosperous.

HOW TO ERADICATE SOCIAL EVILS

Our social life today is infested with so many evils, malpractices, prejudices and orthodox customs. Any superficial analysis of these brings forth conclusions that these can be tackled through external measures like legislation. But a deeper probe into the problem reveals that these are only manifestations of weakness in personal character. It is this weakness that some times takes the shape of social evils and at some other times appears as a political or religious evil. The evils may have varying shapes but all of them arise from a common weakness – lack of moral character. Every society has healthy traditions. There is scope for expression of ideal conduct. Alongside, there are some social evils prevalent. It is for the individual to choose. The choice would depend on the individuals personal character. If a person is narrow minded, selfish, coward and vicious, he would choose the

prevalent social evils. But all those who have courage and exercise discretion would choose differently. It is not possible to force a choice on any one. Social freedom excludes any coercion.

Every society has the best as also the worst choices. We accept and choose according to our mentality. The ones we choose, we regard as traditions and follow them. The others that we reject, are labeled as obsolete, ridiculous or irrelevant. No social practice is universally good or bad. We choose the undesirable and bad customs because they suit our mentality and then blame the force of tradition as the reason for our submission to them. Social compulsions are cited as our excuse for doing something that is otherwise regarded as reprehensible. Such excuses are totally unacceptable. The truth of the matter is that whenever some one has tried to defy evil traditions, his efforts have been praised and appreciated. Such courage helps the relatively weak willed persons and they also start defying evil customs on the analogy of some one having done so before.

We should formulate healthy social traditions. Only that is desirable which leads to individual and social good. Ethics, justice and propriety should be our watch – words in social actions. Our conscience must prick whenever we are involved in an act that is immoral or unethical. The witness may be just an innocent child or even none at all. Character after all is what we are in the dark when no one is looking at us. If it comes to a healthy tradition or a righteous act, we should not be scared of social disapproval or even the whole

world's non-acceptance. The fight against social injustice and exploitation has often to be launched singly. So many men of eminence faced public criticism and disapproval when they stood up for a right cause. Shankracharya, Dayanand, Buddha, Gandhi, Christ, Luther, Marx, Galileo etc. were alone when they said what they felt was correct. But ultimately the world realised the truth of their convictions and statements. They earned the respect of the society having done what many could not do collectively.

RELIGION IS ESSENTIAL AND ALSO USEFUL

Religion and good conduct alone can steer us through our lives in the onwards march to human peace and prosperity. 'Live and let live', can be practiced only with due regard to the aforesaid essentials. Religion or 'Dharma' as it is called in Indian Languages, also signifies a characteristic or exclusive feature. Broadly speaking, religion covers all that is needed to achieve a goal successfully. As such, religion becomes the soul of human existence. Devoid of it, man is no better than a wild animal totally subordinated to his instincts. A person devoid of religion, indulging in actions not backed by convictions, is not looked upon with favour in any society, more so in our set up. The scriptures preach that religious faith protects the righteous man. Whosoever attempts to destroy righteousness, is himself destroyed by the forces let loose by the destruction of religious doctrines. This is a universally accepted fact. Whenever a person has drifted from right conduct, every thing supporting him is deviated from him in due course. Misfortunes invariably surround such a person. His life is one

full of agony, constantly exposed to worries and anxieties.

Religion leads to good conduct and performance of duties. All religions were formed to provide support to men in the performance of their duties and enabling them to stick to ideals. Various rituals and ceremonies connected with religion such as faith, worship, religious recitations, discourses, singing of hymns, community prayers, fasting, visits to religious places, religious customs, festivals, anniversaries etc. have evolved towards the common objective of providing support to men in the performance of their duty, undaunted by temptations and worldly attractions. But for this objective, all these rituals would have been extinct long ago.

Faith in the existence of God, and his worship is aimed at creating in men an awareness that He pervades every creation on earth. He is impartial, judicious and the ultimate giver of all rewards for human exertions. Men should realise His authority and abstain from evil deeds. He should be feared when temptation to do evil is strong. Thus men should respect the limits of conduct set by religion for if he transcends those limits punishment at the hands of the Omnipresent and the Omnipotent is inevitable.

If the follower has no faith in justice as dispensed by the Almighty, all worship would be meaningless. Such worship would be meaningless for him as also for every body else around him. Religious faith is the path leading to salvation, internal peace, self-realisation, prosperity, happiness etc., but only for those who understand the true meaning of religion. Religion is meaningful only for the one who understands and also practices it in his every day life. Religion is the initiator

and the catalyst for good conduct in everyday life. Good conduct ultimately leads to attainment of worldly and divine bliss. It is, therefore, rightly believed that religion is the ultimate source of all happiness. But religion cannot be divorced from its practice in everyday life. A religious life is one in which the practitioner discharges his responsibilities, is mindful of his duties and respects ethical limits. Without these, religion would have no basis worth the name. Good conduct is like the roots and there can be no fruits on a tree which is devoid of roots. One who practices religion in his every day conduct, gains all bliss and prosperity linked with faith, without any conscious effort. All these are denied to the one, who though professing religion, does not practice what the scriptures prescribe. It is our mental attitudes that raise us to exceptional heights or lead us to our downfall. Religion helps us in stabilising our mental attitudes at a level where our conduct remains ideal and in keeping with universally accepted human values. That is why religion has been accorded such an important place in human life. We should understand the cause and effect relationship. The ends must be distinguished from the means. If the whole emphasis is on rituals, religious preachings would have no meaning. The external practices may be means but the ultimate end is the core of religious preachings – practice of human values. It is not enough that we offer prayers to God. We must practice his commandments. Therein alone lies the true worth of religion. The circumstances may vary yet the path is only one. Unless mankind is inspired by religious teachings, the numerous conflicts and problems confronting it cannot be solved. Religion today has been clouded with rituals and ceremonies that seem to hide its true nature.

The original has to be restored. Religion is not opium to mankind as once preached by Marx. It is a positive force. Fundamentalism breeds intolerance and mutual distrust. Communalism is not religion in practice. Religion, as truly understood symbolises love, kindness, service generosity, discipline and mutual good will. Such religion cannot be discarded as unnecessary or not useful. Truly speaking it is religion that gives soul to human society. Devoid of it, human society is no better than a dead decaying carcass.

ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS AND THE WAY OUT

Generations prior to us had relatively much lower earnings. Men had to lead a life of restrained consumption as the means of transport and communication were relatively less developed. Large scale mechanisation had not set in and in the absence of factory production, wants were few. And yet people were not miserable in the absence of a large variety of consumer goods. They were contented, healthier and even more happy. The twentieth century has brought in its trail many more consumer goods. Availability of goods has increased manifold. Yet every one suffers from a feeling of being economically deprived and constantly keeps on working for improving his economic status in the society.

The reason is not far to seek. Every one today keeps on expanding his list of requirements. In the name of civilisation we are heading towards consumerism, a social order in which luxury and ostentatious living is becoming the ultimate goal of all human effort. The whole thinking has geared round to the belief that social status is to be determined by how much material wealth a person owns. As a consequence every one

spends far in excess of his needs. Often the expenses exceed the income and future incomes are pledged on hire-purchase schemes for luxury items. There seems to be no limit to how much can be reasonably spent on any item. Necessities and even comforts have a limit but not so the luxuries and status symbols. If every one is out to beat the rest in display of luxuries, no amount of income would suffice. Economic hardship will continue unabated.

Wisdom lies so much in spending money. Earnings are possible even by windfalls or heredity. But it is only the wise and man with fore-thought who can properly spend his earnings. Those who spend on what is necessary for living and efficient working, who are prudent in planning their income rarely complain about economic hardships. They are rarely in debt.

People are constantly exploring avenues for more income. In this connection, the most practical method would be that we make our conduct gentle and attractive so that more and more people choose to deal with us. All those people who have achieved fame in life had the advantage of getting cooperation from their colleagues and relations. If we are curt in our behaviour with others, we shall not get such cooperation. People would avoid us and even if forced to deal with us, would be indifferent once they are no longer obliged to deal with us. In such a situation, even the able would not achieve much. In contrast, the less able, with the added advantage of cooperation from friends and relations would achieve comparatively higher. This achievement rule also applies in the economic sphere.

The problem of economic hardship is becoming universal. Numerous strategies are being evolved to develop nations economically. Many organisations have been established at international level. Within the country, there are plans and schemes to push more people above the poverty line. It is important that in this process of development, developing human values is also accorded a prime place as one of the targets to be achieved. Unless that is done, the problems of economic hardships will continue to haunt some country or some sector of the society. Unless human greed is restrained, the problems of economic hardships will continue unabated.

THE FOUNDATION OF CITIZENSHIP AND MORALITY

Conflicts and ill will are born out of mutual distrust and prejudices. These lead to undesirable, indecent and immoral incidents in every day life. Today, every one is out to demand his rights. Every one expects to get facilities more than any body else. Duties are no one's priority. Conflicts arise where rights are deemed to be exercised without corresponding performance of duties. Peace is possible where demand for rights is balanced by performance of duties.

Any peaceful social order is possible only if all citizens faithfully perform their duties towards others. The basis for social order and progress is that all citizens consciously and faithfully discharge their social obligations and also their moral responsibilities. A nation's strength lies in how faithfully and conscientiously its citizens perform their civic duties. Where such citizens constitute the majority, civilisations prosper. The excellence of a person or society is best judged by

how it performs its assigned functions. There may be abundant resources with a community but if its members are liars, cheats, deceitful, and lazy, that community is destined to doom sooner or later. Such a society would never be able to achieve a lasting status in the community of nations.

When we are polite to each other, such behaviour generates mutual affection, contentment and happiness. Love is born out of politeness and good behaviour. If at heart one is vicious and unwise, he will never be polite or well-behaved in his relations with others. Whenever one tries to be polite for selfish purposes or expresses courtesy for ulterior motives, he is soon found out. But where such behaviour is expressed naturally, it invariably creates an atmosphere of mutual good will and trust. Where people are bound by feelings of trust and affection, friendship prevails. No other happiness can match the one perceived when friends interact sincerely and faithfully. Man is characterised by his respect for social code of conduct. Animals are not bound by any such codes. It is, therefore, essential that in all their social conduct, men act keeping in view their human responsibilities. Individual conduct should be such that it will cause no inconvenience to others.

There are a number of books on good manners and etiquette. Good manners can also be picked up by observing the behaviour of eminent persons or by listening to their preachings. Thus, upto a point good social conduct can be taught or imbibed. But in the ultimate analysis, good citizenship and social morality can be generated only on the basis of spirituality. If the concern for others, mutual respect and af-

fection, and civility in social conduct is superficial and not a matter of a heartfelt feeling, it would be sheer hypocrisy which would neither last long nor serve any useful purpose. Civilisation must lead to civility in conduct. Civility in conduct can come only in proportion to heartfelt affection and love for others. It is easy for a selfish person to behave nicely with a view to grind an axe or derive some advantage. But to be of service to others at some cost to oneself is possible only for those who have a spiritual background and who have accepted service to others as one of the most desirable things to be done in life. Service to others is strictly limited by service to self. Only those persons can serve others who are willing to cut down their personal convenience and pleasures. If one wants to be helpful to others, he will have to deprive himself of some facilities. Politeness to others is possible only for those who are willing to be harsh to themselves. If our own comforts matter most for us, there is no scope for public service on our part. Being selfish and selfless at the same time is just impossible. Good citizenship demands that each one of us extends our concern to all men and ultimately all living creatures. As human beings, it is our responsibility that we integrate our happiness with those around us and share the miseries of our fellow beings. Once that happens, good conduct and polite behaviour will follow without any conscious effort.

Narrow selfishness is the reason for most of the conflicts, troubles, ill will and distrust prevailing in human societies. Crime and sins also arise out of such a mentality. Family feuds are also caused by narrow selfishness. Litigation, tension, enmity are all manifestations of the same base urge. Disunity and even disintegration result from this one factor. Where

selfishness prevails, mutual love and friendship are the first casualty. No other reason explains why so much of beastly and uncivilised behaviour occurs in societies that could otherwise be much more human. Pleasure and happiness are not inherent in material goods. They arise from friendly relationship and fellow feeling. Anything that we start loving, gives us pleasure.

If we want to get pleasure out of every thing surrounding us, it is possible once we start loving every one around us. If we can get over our narrow selfishness, the whole world would belong to us and any and every thing that makes some one happy would be a source of happiness to us. Then there will be infinite sources dishing out happiness to us all the time. There can be only one way how crimes and sins could be controlled and good will and cordiality expanded. The way lies through expression of politeness and civility in all our dealings. This is the crux of good citizenship and true morality. It is very important that human relations become cordial for once that happens, mutual understanding and cooperation would invariably follow. The path to perpetual peace has to be laid with human virtues.

WHY MENTAL WORRIES SURROUND US?

Human life has many aspects. Peace and happiness is possible only if a certain balance is maintained among the various facets of our existence. We have, in the preceding pages, discussed matters relating to spiritual, political, social, religious, economic and ethical aspects of our lives. It appears as if separate reasons exist for problems arising in the various features of human life. However, a closer scrutiny

would reveal that a single factor is responsible for all problems. It is just one reason manifesting itself differently in different factors of life.

We suffer from so many diseases once our digestive system does not function well. This is an example of many problems manifesting themselves due to a single cause. Similarly, where decline in moral standards takes place, innumerable problems crop up. For instant relief, it may be necessary for the society to tighten its crime prevention measures or reactivate its judicial process. But that would offer no permanent solutions. Our earth has been reduced almost to hell by uncontrolled play of low moral standards. If mankind wants to build a world that is secure, progressive and prosperous, definite improvements will have to be made in our moral standards.

The world is not so constituted that any one of the species, not even men, may appropriate all that it wants. So much depends on circumstances, abilities, exertions and a number of other factors that nature alone controls. Each one of us has to make compromises between aspirations and achievements. For those who have unbridled ambitions, life offers more of frustration, failure and grief. The whole life of such persons is dotted with worry, discontentment, jealousy and pain. They constantly talk about their frustrations. They are disappointed and keep on blaming others for what happens to them. They are the ever complaining people who stink the atmosphere around them with tales of narrow minded concern for themselves only.

In contrast, there are people who have learnt to balance their ambitions. They know that it is much better to enjoy the achievements rather than keep on grumbling about what could not be achieved. We must try for achieving more but this does not mean that we should underrate what we already possess. If some problems are not solved by one method, there is need for evolving alternative strategies. It is too much to expect that every time everything around us will mould itself in a manner that would favour us. Those who have the capacity to adapt according to changing circumstances have less occasions for failure. They modulate their strategies according to the demands of circumstances and succeed more often.

Any one who wishes everything around him to mould itself as per his demands and requirements is destined to grief, failure and frustration. Such people feel everybody else, even God is hostile to them. On the contrary, those who integrate their ambitions with what is possible through grace of God and play their part well treating this world as a stage, manage to find peace and happiness. One cannot rid the world of all the thorns. But any one can wear shoes and march onwards to his destination. Many things change, once we change our approach and attitudes. Grief and discontentment can be substituted with happiness and a feeling of achievement. All that is needed is a new approach to life. Innumerable are the worries and agonies which human mind suffers. There is only one way how we can get over them and that is through a change in our attitude and approach to life. For self-improvement nothing else would work.

HOW TO PREVENT DISEASES

Diseases are neither the natural course nor God ordained. It is no use blaming external factors for the diseases we suffer from. The only reason why diseases appear is that we transgress the rules of nature. Diseases of the digestive system would not appear if the food we take is in its natural form. Fruits, grains, milk etc. when taken without much spicing or processing in quantities that the system accepts without any strain would rarely lead to any complication. While eating, if we follow the simple rules that meals will be taken only after regular intervals and space is left for water and gases that may evolve during the digestive process, indigestion would never occur. If the food that we take is properly digested we would remain free from a number of diseases that arise as a result of faults in the digestive system. When people take food without regard to whether they are hungry or not, in quantities that have no relationship with their body requirements, without adequate mastication and with plenty of spices and fats, many diseases of the stomach and general debility follow. Unrestrained sex gratifications also cause debility. If the body is weak it is more susceptible to infections from outside. Even a lamp with enough fuel is likely to get extinguished if exposed to unusual winds. In the same manner, human body, even when full of potential for a long life, can collapse if exposed to harsh winds of indiscreet food habits. Two great enemies of long and healthy life are an indisciplined life and excessive indulgence in sex. Psychosomatic factors also influence longevity. Worry, anger, jealousy and grief all have an adverse effect on the nervous system. Excitement and mental tensions influence most systems of the human body. So often the rich and wealthy

suffer from diseases caused by mental tensions. Diseases like blood pressure and diabetes cause immense damage and even become health hazards.

A body that is weak internally is most prone to diseases. In a healthy body, there are enough white cells in the blood to fight out any external attack by disease bearing germs and virus. Even some of the deadly infections are initially resisted by the body. Such resistance, however, is ineffective where the system is intrinsically weak. There may be enough of external cleanliness and sanitation but if there is infection within, diseases are bound to erupt. Medicines alone cannot guarantee good health. The doctors can control where the disease has erupted seriously but no medicine can accelerate natural growth or build resistance to disease that a healthy body alone is capable of offering. Those who lead an indisciplined life, invariably keep on inviting diseases. If indiscipline in life continuously axes the branches of good health, how long can medicines come to the rescue of such persons.

The human body is so perfectly built that it even takes care of occasional damages caused to it. If the body is used with discretion, it is built to function without defect. If misused, even machines made out of steel are bound to go defective, what to say of human body made out of flesh and bones. We want to lead a long and healthy life but are reluctant to pay the price. As we sow, so we reap. So, if we do not use our body with discretion, we cannot have a disease free physique. If diseases occur because we are exposing our systems to unnatural strains, we have no one else to blame except ourselves. In such cases, the only way out is to im-

prove ourselves and lead a natural life. Any one who has realised this simple cause and effect relationship is the greatest physician in himself. He seeks no one's advice, guidance or help for keeping in good health. Any one who wants to regain his lost vitality, has only to take resort to this simple rule of good health. It can be so easily tested. The only way to solve life's problems lies in improving ones own self.

MULTIPLE PROBLEMS, SINGLE SOLUTION

We may consider any problem relating to any sphere of life, and we shall find that in the ultimate analysis it is the degradation of our moral standards that account for it. Any lasting solution to human problems can only be found by improvement in our moral conduct. Where the roots are strong, the branches and leaves are always healthy and fully grown.

The problems in our society are innumerable. Casteism, fatalism, division, conflict, poverty, disease, illiteracy, filth, corruption, crime, laziness, deceit, dishonesty, insecurity, class conflicts, inequality, backwardness, dowry, crime against women and weaker sections of society, drug addiction, child marriage and *sati* are some of the problems infesting our social structure. Many official and unofficial agencies are involved in eradication of such evils. These efforts have a place in our life but then it has to be recognised that the ultimate solution lies in improving our standards of morality and social conduct. All social evils are manifestations of the devil in man. Once these evil tendencies get sublimated, it would be much easier to eradicate these and other evils from human society. As long as this sublimation does not take place

and men continue to act under the influence of devilish tendencies leading to immoral conduct, the evils will continue in one form or the other.

If there are toxins in the body, they will keep on oozing out in one form or the other. If their exit from one source is checked, they will burst out in some other form. If the formations of these toxins is controlled, the body will become free from many diseases. The same is true about social evils. If immoral conduct can be checked (and that is possible only through improvement in moral standards) the source of social evils will dry up in course of time. A vice free society would be the natural outcome of such a reform.

A healthy plant is possible only out of a healthy seed planted in appropriate soil, nursed with proper manure and irrigation. In the same way, the health of a society is determined by the quality of its persons and the conditions prevailing therein. Where men are possessed by evil thoughts, even healthy social circumstances would not lead to a prosperous social order. Misfortunes invariably surround people who are not noble in thoughts and deeds. As such, it is relevant that as we talk about social reforms or progress, we also take into account the need for initiating measures that would lead to a balanced development of the personality of the social constituents. It is a misconception to believe that once there is enough wealth, every one would be happy. If money power gets concentrated in people with low moral standards, it can play havoc to the peace and prosperity of the society. Money promotes happiness only when it is at the command of people with noble thoughts and concern for humanity.

Every day, we come across instances of families indulging in fights and litigation on matters relating to land or property. So often, children inherit wealth from their ancestors and waste it on drinks, in gambling and other vicious pursuits. So often, persons are so much after earning money that they have no leisure. They overwork their system and get many diseases as a consequence. Some others are tempted by illegal and unethical means to get more money. They are defamed and face a dismal future. Such people may have lots of money but still they face ignominy and many more agonies just because money had become to them not the means but the end of life. Acquisitions such as education, art, skills, status, fame etc. are possible only through honest work. The other requisites are single minded devotion, proper utilisation of available time and the will to succeed. Success achieved is directly proportional to devotion and effort. Only those who have a single minded devotion to their objectives achieve success. Only such people achieve fame through activities directed towards social good.

Spiritual progress and self-realisation are achieved only by such people as can subordinate their base instincts to higher emotions. This needs life long devotion. Mere occasional worship or performance of rituals is not enough. If self-discipline is ignored and no efforts made to counteract the influence of base instincts, the higher ideals of human life can never be achieved.

Progress has many directions. Life has many facets. A total development of human personality is possible only in an individual who has the capacity to turn unfavourable con-

ditions into favourable ones. Every one needs resources to succeed. It is legitimate to work for acquisition of resources necessary for the success of any venture. But what often gets ignored in the process is that the mode of acquisition has to be guided by the desire for social good. Peace and lasting prosperity is possible only when the resources are acquired and spent on activities aimed at promoting social good and in keeping with morality. Progress would be manifold if the efforts to acquire resources are also matched with efforts to raise moral standards involved in the acquisition and use of material resources. What happens in the world outside us is determined by how we think within. If our thoughts are pure and noble, the external life around is bound to be happy and prosperous for all mankind.

THIS IS ESSENTIAL, WE CANNOT BE INDIFFERENT TO IT

We have to wage a constant war against the evil in man. Then alone is any spiritual progress possible. If we choose to be indifferent in our efforts to counteract evil human tendencies, there will be more and more miseries. Evil has an inherent appeal since it offers immediate sensuous pleasure. It tends to increase in geometric progressions, if left unchecked. It is, therefore, important that no human society becomes indifferent to the growth of social evils. They always tend to run rampant. If there is evil all around it is futile to hope that any individual will remain unaffected by it. Where the entire atmosphere is vitiated, every one is bound to suffer. There can be no islands of peace amidst oceans of turmoil arising out of a free play of evil in man. Even if we confine our

concern for individual security and happiness, it becomes essential that we do something towards control and eradication of social evils. Even if we forget about building a new world order, for survival in the existing system, we have to do something to ensure that we remain unaffected by the social evils. Since we cannot possibly insulate ourselves against all that is happening in the society of which we are a part, the only way out is to contribute our might towards control of social evils surrounding us. Control of floods is the only way of protecting individual houses from the ravages of flood for, when the river swells and overflows its banks, neither a hut nor a concrete house on the banks is spared from destruction.

If there is immorality in our locality, our children are bound to be affected by it sooner or later. If other children in the school use abusive language, our own children will also pick up the same. If there is an increasing number of thieves in the society, some day we are bound to be their victims.

Whatever is present in the environment around us, will affect us and our family. It is true about weather and also about moral standards. The need, therefore, is that our front against evil practices should not be self-centered. We should not wait till the enemy is at our doors. The effort should be to fight social evils even before they have a direct bearing on us. Social reforms are given priority and importance in efforts to establish a new world order. The approach is partly philanthropic aimed at social good and world peace. But more than that is the realisation that even our personal interest are safe only in a society where the rule of law prevails and where human values are given an upper hand compared to self interest leading to various social evils.

As we ponder around us, we find an acute shortage of high moral standards, generosity, cordiality and devotion to duty. Nature created for us a beautiful world but we seem to be making a hell out of it. So much has been made ugly and hellish by man. Distrust, suspicion, fear and misery haunts mankind. There is so much of material progress and yet what seems to be decaying is the human conscience. The soul is dying while so much around us is being invented and discovered. Moral regeneration is the most neglected aspect of our lives these days. Unfortunately, there is not even enough consciousness that such regeneration is basic to material progress through which we propose to make men happier. Moral regeneration, and the need for it, is occasionally talked about or some brochures are published here and there. It is more to create ripples of sensation rather than an effort to put the idea on a solid base from where it could be launched to cover every area of human conduct.

It is tragic that we do not involve ourselves in this quest for regenerating human values among men. This is the most relevant and the most important matter that determines our peace and prosperity. No worth while efforts are coming forth and mankind is yet to awaken to the need for moral regeneration as the prerequisite for a world order in which every one can live in peace.

As we reflect back on the characters in the great epic Ramayana, we find so much idealism in practice that it fills our heart with devotion. Ram, Laxman, Sita, Hanuman, Bharat, Dashrath, Kaushalya, preferred to abide by morality even at enormous cost to themselves. They are known not for the

palace intrigues but for a high moral conduct. The Ramayana is worshipped in crores of homes all over India and even abroad not just because it is a great literary masterpiece but because its characters offer for each one of us a model to imitate. The brotherly affection of Laxman and Bharat, the sacrifice on the part of Kaushalya and Sumitra encouraging their sons to follow the path of righteousness, the devotion of Sita, the sacrifice of Urmila, the efforts of Hanuman in the cause of establishing justice, are all examples that are cited in innumerable families to inspire their members even today.

Idealism is for practicing. Only if we can keep this maxim in focus, we would be successful in creating a just social order. Our ancestors did so faithfully. So often, they had to suffer privations and undergo immense personal hardships to be able to stand upto their ideals. But they always had the courage of their convictions and were happy about their having stood by their ideals at all costs. They did succeed, through their example, in creating a society where righteousness was respected and where men of character were valued. What we need today is a return to that state of society where ideals provide us the strength, necessary to stand upto temptations of evils. Patiently and dutifully we need to turn back to our heritage and lead lives guided by high ideals of human conduct.

It is worth waiting for an era in which people again start behaving with each other, the way they did in ancient societies. The cordiality that once bound relations between parents, brothers, neighbours and citizens is once again the need of the day. Even the gods would envy a social order in

which men and women treat each other with respect, where the traders and customers serve and feel served (not exploited), where the workers are honest in performance of duty and the employers generous in payment of remuneration, where every one earns his bread, where there are no idle incomes and where people are considerate to each other in their hour of need. Evils such as deceit, theft, dishonesty, cheating, breach of faith, unethical conduct, injustice etc. will be despised in such a society. People will be leading disciplined lives and hence be healthy and blessed with longevity. Contented and hard working, no one will remain deprived or exploited. Mutual affection and goodwill will abound among the citizens, irrespective of their position in the society. That order is worth aspiring for.

All this sounds like an Utopia, but it is not a proposition impossible to achieve. We in India, have a past and many of the good traditions still continue to rule our society. We have our heritage as our additional advantage. We do not have to build a new social order. All that we need is to revert back to some of the better things that once ruled our society and for so many centuries. So much of idealism already exists in our thoughts and some of our social practices. We only have to strengthen them and in some cases revive what once came to us naturally. Our culture is fertile and accepts the greatness of men like Ram, Krishna, Buddha, Mahavir and many more. Their preachings are the way of life for so many of us. Some preachings have not been practiced for long. They have undergone atrophy. They need to be revived. Certain others may have to be strengthened. Preachings which have

become out of date may be amended. But the core of all religious teachings and preachings of great men need to be preserved and accepted by each one of us, gradually if not immediately. Such moral regeneration could start from us and then we could lead other countries of the world. The entire humanity could then be at peace and share a prosperity based on equity, and good will as is found in any family. Mankind would then start moving from darkness to light, from ignorance to knowledge and finally from death to immortality. Let us all join together in this Herculean task to restore our lost glory.

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About the Author :

Pandit Shriram Sharma Acharya, a pioneer of spiritual renaissance was born on 20th September 1911, in Anwakheda, Agra District. He scrupulously carried out the biddings of his *Guru*, a great *Himalayan Yogi*, when he was fifteen years of age.

He took part in the struggle for independence as a volunteer, went to jail a number of times and embarked upon the task of social and moral upliftment through spiritual means in 1935 with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi.

A sage, a visionary and a reformer, the Acharya initiated 100 points *Yug Nirman Yojna*, lived a disciplined life of devout austerity, visited the Himalayas several times and attained spiritual eminence.

The *Gayatri Pariwar* fraternity; Shantikunj Ashram— an academy for moral and spiritual awakening; Brahmavarchas Research Institute— which strives to synthesize science with spirituality and over 3000 social reform centres (*Shakti-peeths*) are his greatest contributions to the modern world.

He translated the entire *Vedic Vangmaya* and accomplished a feat of writing more than 2700 books on all aspects of life.

The Acharya, Great devotee of *Gayatri* lived an ideal life for 80 years and voluntarily shed his physical sheath on *Gayatri Jayanti*, 2nd June 1990.

Printed By
Yug Nirman Yojana Press, Mathura